

R.13-01-010

Moving CTF Forward

Workshop on Party Proposals

Proposal from Center for Accessible Technology

Melissa W. Kasnitz

March 10, 2014

Clarify Goals

- “Determine whether the CTF is fulfilling its purpose, and whether the CTF’s current structure and administrative processes are adequate to further to program’s goals.” OIR at p. 11.
- Directly address concerns about the size of the Fund.
- Directly address purpose and structure of support for CBOs.
- Once goals are clear, this will inform the selection of products (e.g. support for voice services and distinctions between “advanced” versus “state of the art” services)

CTF's Role in Supporting CBOs

“In order to qualify for the CBO discount, a CBO must provide proof at the time of application that it is a tax exempt organization. This CBO must also certify that it offers health care, job training, job placement, or educational instruction. This latter requirement ensures that the discounted telecommunications services are being used to directly or indirectly benefit the public at large, and that the discount is not being used simply to reduce the CBO's telecommunications expenses.” D.96-10-066 at p. 37.

- Policymakers must clarify what constitutes “indirect” benefits and how to ensure that the discount is not simply being used to reduce expenses.

CBO Eligibility

- Once goals are clarified, eligibility standards can be addressed
- The most important criteria is the client base that is being served. As long as disadvantaged Californians benefit, an organization should be eligible for support.
- Support should be provided for smaller organizations that serve disadvantaged communities, whether by location, income, ethnicity, or other community of interest such as disability. “Smaller” organizations means those with annual budgets below \$5 million.

Eligibility for Other Fund Recipients:

Support entities with limited alternative resources.

- The eligibility threshold for private schools should be reduced from the current endowment threshold of \$50 million.
- Fund administrators should review the services used at community colleges to understand who is being served and how. This can inform future considerations of eligibility.
- Community colleges should make computer resources available to local community members who are not students.

Funding Level Review Comes Last

- While concerns about funding are valid, they can only be considered once other policy issues are addressed.
- Other decisions by policymakers may substantially impact the Fund's size and growth.
- If further constraints are needed, consider methods of prioritization and/or variable levels of support based on need or program structure.